THE DICKENSIAN

A Magazine for Dickens Lovers
and Monthly Record of the Dickens Fellowship

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WHEN FOUND—

THE latest of the novels of Dickens to go out of copyright is *Our Mutual Friend*, which was published towards the end of October, 1865. It is not thought by many to be one of the novelist's best books. Even Forster considered it was wanting in freshness and natural development, and devoid of the creative power which marked his earlier writings. But there are many, on the other hand, who claim it as a favourite of the author's works. One of the earliest criticisms of it appeared in the *Athenæum* immediately after its publication, and we reprint it in our present number. We also reproduce the frontispiece to the first cheap edition of the book, which was drawn by A. Boyd Houghton. The manuscript of the novel is now in the Drexel Institute, Philadelphia, having been bequeathed to it by G. W. Childs, who purchased it against the South Kensington Museum, who failed to secure it at £1,200.

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It may justly be said that next month will mark a notable event in the annals of the Dickens world, when the two new volumes of the "National" edition of the novelist's writings will be published, entitled "Miscellaneous Papers from the *Examiner*, *Household Words*, *All the Year Round*: Poems and Plays." The contents of these two volumes have not only never been included in any edition of Dickens's works before, but the majority of the pieces in the first of them have now been identified as the work of the novelist for the first time. These comprise some ninety of his contributions to *Household Words*, in addition to which many of the *Examiner* articles referred to by Forster in his biography of Dickens, and which previous search has failed to discover, have also been traced. Of these articles it is too soon to speak, but they will be dealt with in these pages at length in due course. The Editor of this magazine having had the privilege of collecting and preparing the material for publication, we may be permitted to say that it is not of the nature of ephemera, but comprises articles and sketches written in the prime of the novelist's fame and worthy of that fame.

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One of the articles is entitled "The Spirit of Chivalry," dealing with Daniel Maclise's picture with that title in the gallery of the Houses of Parliament, which we printed in our October number. At the time we were unable to state in what magazine this article appeared, as there is nothing to indicate where it was published on the galley proof which is in the Forster collection. This informa-

tion we are now able to supply, thanks to the persistent search made by Mr. C. Van Noorden, who recently discovered it in *Douglas Jerrold's Shilling Magazine* for August, 1845. Therein it appeared in a slightly condensed form, evidently cut down to fill the space available for it.

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Mr. Bransby Williams returned from his American tour early last month, where he met with quite a remarkable reception. Wherever he appeared the audience was enthusiastic to a degree, and the general verdict was that no such character acting had been seen in the States before. He had many tempting offers to stay there, but had, of course, to refuse them on account of his engagement to appear at the London Hippodrome, where he played his famous "Scrooge" sketch during the Christmas holidays. Among Mr. Williams's many successes we doubt if anything he does is as artistic and realistic as this of "Scrooge." It is not a character representation, but the whole spirit and teaching of "A Christmas Carol" condensed into a couple of scenes. Scrooge's various moods and temperaments, the good humour of the other characters, the environment, the very atmosphere suggested by Dickens's masterpiece—all are realized and presented by Mr. Williams in such a masterly manner as to bring the lessons of the book home to his hearers as they never were brought home before.

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Mr. Williams is not only an artist. He is a whole-hearted Dickens lover. Therein is the secret of his success. He was a Dickens lover first and an actor afterwards. So imbued is he with the Dickens spirit that he loves to live the part as well as to act it. He is always ready to help the Dickens Fellowship in its charitable work whenever he can, and only last month, at considerable inconvenience and trouble to himself, he assisted the Dramatic Club at the New Cross Theatre in their efforts for the London hospitals. And, again, during Christmas week he visited several of the poorer hospitals and personally gave to the tiny inmates toys and dolls in memory of Tiny Tim. He was attired in the Dickens costume, and was assisted by his own dresser representing Father Christmas.

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Christmas time brings with it a flood of Dickens literature. Not only new editions of his seasonable books, but articles in all sorts of newspapers and magazines. The Christmas just passed has been no exception. Nearly every paper had some reference to Dickens and his books in some way or other, whilst several magazines had special articles dealing with the subject. The most notable of these was Mr. Theodore Watts-Dunton's "Dickens and 'Father Christmas,'" in which he reprinted his sonnet from the *Athenæum* which was inspired by hearing a poor child ask, when some one told her Dickens was dead, "Will Father Christmas die too?" The article takes the form of an appeal for the children in Famine Street.

THE EDITOR.

OUR MUTUAL FRIEND

A CONTEMPORARY REVIEW*

A NEW novel by the greatest novelist living is not to be dismissed with a few jaunty phrases of rapture, or of qualification; for a simple yet serious reason. Those who, with understanding, as distinct from that wonderment which belongs to the foolish face of praise, have followed Mr. Dickens throughout his career of authorship, cannot fail to have perceived that time and success have not made him careless—whether as concerns his art, his public, or himself. As little have they spoilt, or dimmed, or turned aside his quick sympathies, his power of minute observation, his keen desire to advocate what he deems right, his wondrous force of hand and colour as a painter in words. Every true and conscientious man becomes increasingly solicitous on these points with time and success. The boy may dash off a brilliant sketch as a matter of course: the ripe artist will ponder over his coming picture. But may he not ponder too long and over-solicitously? This question, we fancy, may be asked with respect to *Our Mutual Friend*. Only the other day its author gave us that French story of "Little Bebelle," one of the most exquisite pieces of pathos in fiction, the value of which will be best tested by comparing it with Sterne's Shandy-isms. Only yesterday, out of a dingy street in the Strand, from no more promising place than a lodging-house, the artist by a touch brought to light a homely, loving fellow-creature, worthy to "sit above the salt" among the best of the best; Mrs. Lirriper—as real "a being of the mind" as Mr. Pickwick, as Mrs. Gamp, as the Micawbers, as any of the long line of living creatures called up by the novelist, whom we know intimately, in all their strength and weakness, and whose deeds and sayings have passed into household words.

If, therefore, we say that, during its course of fragmentary publication, *Our Mutual Friend* has raised more question than certain of its predecessors, the circumstance arises from the nature of the story, and not because the fountain of variety shows signs of exhaustion. None of the series is so intricate in plot as this tale. It would be wasted labour to detail or analyse a chain of events which everyone has already handled. Enough to state our conviction, that the closest attention is required to hold certain of its connecting links. From the first number it was evident to us that the murdered John Harmon was not murdered, but had set himself down in the household of the wife allotted to him by a fantastic will, for the purpose of testing her real nature. The circumstances of the deed, which led to his shipmate Radfoot being mistaken for, and murdered, with himself are mistily revealed in the long soliloquy during which he determines on the renunciation of his identity. Some incompleteness, referable to partial recollection, may have been an intentional stroke of art on the novelist's part—may belong to the nature of the catastrophe, but it produces an impression of uncertainty. Then,

*Reprinted from *The Athenæum*, Oct. 2, 1865.

again, the complications of the story may have necessitated sharp turns and surprises, which bear unfavourably on some of the characters. We fancy the conversion of Bella Wilfer, the capricious beauty longing for wealth and emancipation from her portentous mother and shrewish sister, to be somewhat too sudden—even though it did grow out of her dismal experience of the simulated avarice overgrowing Mr. Boffin. This avarice, again, however adroitly devised and minutely wrought out as a piece of masquerade, leading to a final surprise for which no one can have been prepared, has, of necessity, implied the introduction of some elements discordant with those of the character so forcibly conceived and broadly sketched. The honest, truthful Boffin of the Mounds, whose simple right-mindedness virtually overruled his wretched old miser-master who had the fortune to leave, might have been led by his desire to right what was wrong and to regenerate what was defective, to connive in the scheme of amending the coquetries of Bella, the oddly designated bride of the great fortune; but his inability to carry such a long-drawn piece of subtle comedy through we beg (respectfully to our great novelist) to question. And we are satisfied that so great-hearted a man should not on any excuse of plot or plan whatsoever, or any desire to "lead on" a miserable knave to the full display of his greed and knavery, have been submitted to the degradation of the scene with Wegg, after the discovery of old Harmon's second will in the house of the anatomical curiosity-monger. That which belongs and befits a detective policeman, apt at disguises as Mr. Bucket of never-to-be-forgotten memory, sits ill on an honest, ignorant, affectionate creature, such as he is. And though we love Mrs. Boffin, the comfortable and instinctively delicate woman (one of Mr. Dickens's most genial creations), with all our hearts, we cannot but feel as if we owed her a grudge for her connivance. Truth and nature are here strained, in subservience to the requirements of literary art.

We fancy that the necessity of conducting an unusually large crowd of characters through a maze of unusual intricacy has told on other of the personages of the story. Harmon, its hero, is, by his position, betwixt light and dark, inevitably partially effaced. Bella, the coquettish daughter of Mrs. Wilfer, the stupendous, is capitally touched in the chameleon hues of her character, and royally righted at last; but during a large part of the tale she keeps us in a state of perpetual uneasiness, hardly justifying the love she is described as inspiring. Then Lizzie Hexham, though not precisely a sketch, has not substance enough for the place she is expected to fill in the reader's interest. Lastly, we cannot conceive the possibility of a man so holy, humble, affectionate and beneficent as Riah the Hebrew on any grounds of compact, obligation or sophistry, lending himself, one hour after it was known, to the hypocritical wickedness of such a tyrant as Fledgeby, the usurer, the meanest creature (this is saying much) as yet created by the hand that painted the moneylenders in *Nickleby*; and Brass, and Krook, and Fagin, and Uriah Heep. The explanation made

by him at last to the little weird doll's dressmaker shows us that Mr. Dickens has felt the necessity of some explanation, which is insufficient to convince us. We cannot but be reminded by it of an awkwardness, somewhat similar, in Miss Edgeworth's "Ormond"—a tale expressly undertaken by her in atonement for what had been represented to her as too wholesale a depreciation of a people against whom "every man has his hand."

Thus much by way of qualification—or call it speculation rather—concerning a novel which gains immensely by being perused without "stop, let, or hindrance." On returning to the characters, that of Bradley Headstone, the schoolmaster, dogged, sensual, unready; his tremendous passion compressed by the responsibilities and respectabilities of his position, takes the foremost place among them as an original conception. Frightfully though he suffers, even though when he confronts Wrayburn, his *poco-curante* rival, there is a show of reason and of championship on his side, there is no possibility of any one's feeling a moment's pity on his behalf, so utterly is the master-desire of his life rendered unlovable by the forms in which it is clad. There have been many murders, and many pictures of remorse in novels; and none more powerful than the pages in which we were shown the wanderings of Bill Sikes and the slinking off home of Jonas Chuzzlewit, after his bloody deed in the wood; but Mr. Dickens has exceeded even those in the scene where the wretched criminal, tortured by the rebuking consciousness of his having failed in his diabolical design, is dogged and dragged back to the fatal spot by his hideous confidant. Nothing can be more masterly as a display of blank, inevitable retribution and wretchedness. Redeeming touch there is none about Bradley Headstone; even the concealed love for him of the soft-hearted, prim little schoolmistress, delicately indicated as it is, fails to furnish it.

To change the fancy, the author of *Pickwick* never revelled among richer whimsies than are to be found in the comic parts of this tale; in the Veneering household, and the guests assembled by it. The mistress of the mansion and of the camels on the dinner-table, with her readiness to weep, her stupid sentimentalities about "Baby," her inane admiration of the prancing gossip of that old mechanical harridan, Lady Tippins, because the same passes with her as a fashionable pearl of great price, the portentous Podsnap, who knocks down argument by British sentiments and laconic, insolent dogmatism, the civil, misty, nobly connected old Twemlow (who would be a true gentleman, every inch of him, were he not a little too promiscuously willing to sit at anybody's feast), the pair of lawyers, Mortimer and Eugene (whose sincerity of attachment one for the other is not the worst point in the book), the *supers* (as they say on the stage), Boots and Brewer, are all new people in print, whom every diner-out has met every week of his life in private. The vivacity and variety of this division of the novel are admirable. But when talking of dinners in *Our Mutual Friend*, we must not forget the most incomparable dinner of all, that of the newly married couple, Bella and John, at Green-

wich, for the sake of the sentimental waiter, "the young man on liking," so ignominiously thrust aside by the arch-potentate in waiting, who conceived that he had alone a right to the solemn monopoly of the secret of the day.

We must stop, though touches and traits rise on us by the hundred, justifying what has been said, that *Our Mutual Friend* is one of Mr. Dickens's richest and most carefully wrought books. If we demur to Wegg and to Miss Jenny Wren as to a pair of eccentrics approaching that boundary line of caricature towards which their creator is, by fits, tempted, we cannot recall anything more real, more cheering, than the sketch of the Milveys, clergyman and clergyman's wife, both so unconscious in their self-sacrificing virtue and goodness, yet the two so capitally discriminated by the extra touch of zeal and briskness (and suspicion of the Jews) on the woman's part. It might be suggested that too much space is given to the impostor couple, the Lammles, and their designs on Podsnap's poor, foolish little daughter; but, again, how capitally thrown in to the woman's part is its scrap of shame and of remorseful feeling! Her figure, ere she quits the scene, unconsciously sketching on the table-cloth with her parasol, is not to be forgotten, as marked by that attitude and occupation.

Enough, then, has been said to indicate in what point of view we conceive this novel may be regarded, and to prove that, on its being read and read again, every lover of types of human character, every student of art in fiction, every man who has "humour" in his soul, will find, each and all, enjoyment.

POETICAL TRIBUTES TO CHARLES DICKENS

XXXVII

DICKENS RETURNS ON CHRISTMAS DAY

JUNE 9, 1873.

"A ragged girl in Drury Lane was heard to exclaim, 'Dickens dead! Then will Father Christmas die too?'"

"DICKENS is dead!" Beneath that grievous cry
London seemed shivering in the summer heat;
Strangers took up the tale like friends that meet:
"Dickens is dead!" said they, and hurried by;
Street children stopped their games—they knew not why,
But some new night seemed darkening down the street.
A girl in rags, staying her way-worn feet,
Cried, "Dickens dead! Will Father Christmas die?"
City he loved, take courage on thy way!
He loves thee still, in all thy joys and fears.
Though he whose smile made bright thine eyes of grey—
Though he whose voice, uttering thy burthened years,
Made laughters bubble through thy sea of tears—
Is gone, Dickens returns on Christmas Day!

THEODORE WATTS-DUNTON.

"DOLLY VARDEN" AT THE KING'S THEATRE

By ARTHUR WAUGH

ON Monday evening, December 16th, at the King's Theatre, Hammersmith, Mr. Walter Dexter presented one more of his ingenious adaptations from Dickens—the story upon which toll was levied being on this occasion *Barnaby Rudge*. There was a fairly large audience, and the receipts must be regarded as satisfactory, but one could not help feeling that there ought to have been more well-known Dickensians in the house. A *première* of this kind makes great demands upon the energies and nerves of all those immediately concerned, and one would have hoped that a Dickensian sympathy would compel all those who are keen upon the Fellowship to be present. However, the audience was very enthusiastic, and Miss Marriott in particular got encouraging rounds of applause with every entrance and exit. So that the evening was filled with spirit from first to last, and the general finish of the performance reflected great credit on the stage management of Mr. A. E. Brookes Cross, who must have worked hard to achieve so much.

DOLLY VARDEN
From a drawing by "Phiz"

Barnaby Rudge is not an easy subject for the dramatist, and upon the whole Mr. Dexter must be said to have done wonderfully well in making such a simple and close-knit comedy out of its rather intricate material. As in all cases of adaptation from Dickens, a great deal had to be omitted. By calling his play "Dolly Varden" the author suggested at once that a domestic love interest was to be the main theme; and, though most people were probably disappointed to miss the picturesque figure of Barnaby himself, a little reflection must have shown them that to

introduce him would have been to split up and destroy the principal interest. Mr. Dexter wisely exercised great economy; introduced only such characters as were essential to the Dolly Varden romance; and used Dickens's dialogue wherever possible. His "joining of his flats," and consolidating of the incidents were workmanlike, and the comedy played uncommonly well, and told its story very neatly.

The first act was laid in the Vardens' parlour, and served principally to introduce the characters. Here the uninstructed spectator learnt that the Varden household was subject to connubial discomforts; that Mrs. Varden, abetted by Miggs, was a pecking hen to an amiable husband; that Dolly was a coquette, with a weak spot in her heart for Joe Willet, and that Sam Tappertit, pursued by the amorous Miggs, was engaged in theatrical conspiracies behind the scenes. Incidentally murmurs of the "No Popery" agitation were floated across the stage. In Act II. the whole company was transferred to the Maypole, where Joe Willet was found to be hardly used by a bullying father, and Dolly continued to play skittles with his admiration. A humorous love scene between Miggs and Tappertit afforded comic relief, and towards the end of the act serious interest was introduced in Joe Willet's passionate determination to leave his unsympathetic home and enlist as a soldier. The curtain fell upon Dolly weeping for a departed lover, whom a word of sincerity from her might have kept at home. Act III. found us back at the Vardens' a year later. The "No Popery" riots are in full swing, and old Varden is girding on his sword as a Volunteer in defence of home. Tappertit enters drunk and betrays his own conspiracy, and, after old Varden has gone off to drill, Simon and Hugh raid the house and endeavour to carry off Dolly. But Miggs, bursting from under the table, fixes her claws in his face, and at the right moment Joe Willet arrives electrically to the rescue, minus an arm lost in the war, but plus any quantity of pluck and reputation. So all ends happily with the lovers united, the parents at peace at last, and the pestilential Miggs packed out of the house, screaming recriminations to the last.

Such is a brief outline of Mr. Dexter's comedy, and here follows the cast:—

Mrs. Varden	Miss H. Pearl Humphry.
Miss Miggs	Miss Kathleen Marriott.
Gabriel Varden	Fredk. T. Harry.
Simon Tappertit	Frank Staff.
Dolly Varden	Miss Marie Lorraine-Stevens. (By arrangement with Mr. J. Maundy-Gregory.)
Joe Willet	Guy H. Inglis.
John Willet (Landlord of the Maypole)	A. E. Brookes Cross.
Solomon Daisy	Augustus J. Chinnery.
Maypole Hugh	Walter Dexter.

At the first performance, taking the difficulties into consideration, the acting maintained a remarkably even level. There were no trying pauses, and though it was apparent in one or two places (notably in the raid of Simon and Hugh in the last act) that the

action would have been quickened to advantage by a cut or two, the general movement of the piece was brisk and lively. The honours of the evening certainly went to Miss Kathleen Marriott. Her Miggs made its way with the audience at once, and she was the prime favourite from stalls to gallery. Admirably made up, she proved herself artist enough to play a horribly unsympathetic part for everything it was worth, and, if we may say so, she has most satisfactorily overcome a tendency to exaggeration which marred some of her earlier impersonations. Her performance at the King's was thoroughly in the picture, and nearly all the "go" of the broader side of the comedy depended upon her. Miss Lorraine-Stevens was not given very much chance in the title-rôle. Except looking pretty, winsome, and sometimes tearful, and being perpetually kissed by everybody, she had little to do; but she contrived to do all this with much grace and delicacy, although the embraces of some of the actors were embarrassingly angular and stiff. Apart from these two, the impression left upon most of the audience on the first evening was that the best acting was given to the smallest characters. The Solomon Daisy of Mr. Augustus J. Chinnery was a sheer delight. A better little bit of character-acting no one could wish to see, and the disappointment was universal when this character made such an early disappearance from the play. Mr. Walter Dexter also was admirable as Hugh: he gave the character breadth and grimness without over-doing it. In fact, the raid scene depended entirely on him, for Mr. Frank Staff, who in technical finish and ease was probably the best actor in the play, was not served well by his voice at Hammersmith. His acting was full of little true touches, but he never gauged the acoustic capacity of the house, and many of his best effects fell short of the footlights. This was a great pity, and in the "rattle-bang" scene with Dolly and Hugh nearly caused the whole thing to fall flat. Miss Pearl Humphry and Mr. Frederick Harry worked hard in difficult parts, and Mr. Guy Inglis certainly made the very best of a rôle that, in less skilful hands, might easily have degenerated into a "stick." The play was vociferously received, as it indeed deserved.

It should be added that the evening's entertainment commenced with a delightful musical sketch by Miss Nellie Ganthony, which many would have liked to hear longer, and closed with a series of speeches by Mr. E. S. Willard, the Mayor of Hammersmith, and Mr. J. B. Mulholland, some of which (but emphatically not Mr. Willard's) might well have been shorter. But perhaps some ceremony of this kind was inseparable from the charitable object of the performance.

TWO OTHE RPERFORMANCES

The same play was given on the following Wednesday and Friday, at the Marlborough Theatre, Holloway, and the Broadway Theatre, New Cross, respectively. The cast was the same, but, as was only natural, the actors were more at home in their respective parts. In

each theatre the performance was greatly enjoyed by all who witnessed it.

At the Marlborough Theatre, Mrs. H. Beerbohm Tree kindly gave two recitals, with her customary elocutionary grace and perfection, between the second and third acts, and at the end of the play Mr. Martin Harvey made a short speech from the stage, on Dickens and his influence on actors. Referring to the work of Irving, Toole, Emery, and Jenny Lee in Dickens's characters, he also told how much he owed to the same influence.

At the Broadway, Mr. Bransby Williams was good enough to give his dramatic monologue of "Scrooge" at the beginning of the evening's entertainment, and met with a great reception. After the performance Mr. Bowerman, M.P., the Mayor of Deptford, the Mayor of Lewisham, and Sir John Purcell each delivered an address from the stage during the ceremony of publicly thanking the Dickens Fellowship Dramatic Club for their efforts on behalf of charity.

B. W. M.

THE INDIVIDUALITY OF LOCOMOTIVES*

By CHARLES DICKENS

IT is a remarkable truth, and, well applied, it might be profitable to us, in helping us to make fair allowance for the differences between the temperaments of different men—that every locomotive engine running on a railway has a distinct individuality and character of its own.

It is perfectly well known to experienced practical engineers that if a dozen different locomotive engines were made at the same time, of the same power, for the same purpose, of like materials, in the same factory, each of those locomotive engines would come out with its own peculiar whims and ways, only ascertainable by experience. One engine will take a great meal of coke and water at once; another will not hear of such a thing, but will insist on being coaxed by spades-full and buckets-full. One is disposed to start off, when required, at the top of his speed; another must have a little time to warm at his work, and to get well into it. These peculiarities are so accurately mastered by skilful drivers that only particular men can persuade particular engines to do their best. It would seem as if some of these "excellent monsters" declared, on being brought out of the stable, "If it's Smith who is to drive me, I won't go. If it's my friend Stokes, I am agreeable to anything!"

All locomotive engines are low-spirited in damp and foggy weather. They have a great satisfaction in their work when the air is crisp and frosty. At such a time they are very cheerful and brisk, but they strongly object to haze and Scotch mists. These are points of character on which they are all united. It is in their peculiarities and varieties of character that they are most remarkable.

* Reprinted for the first time from *Household Words*, September 21, 1850.

The railway company who should consign all their locomotives to one uniform standard of treatment, without any allowance for varying shades of character and opinion, would soon fall as much behindhand in the world as those greater Governments are, and ever will be, who pursue the same course with the finer piece of work called Man.

COMPETITIONS FOR DICKENSIANS

MANY of our subscribers who entered for the Dickens examinations which ran through our issues of 1906 have often expressed a wish that some new competition should be set for readers of *The Dickensian*. Many thought that the series of examination papers was not only difficult, but was spread over too long a period before a definite result was attained. In order to conform to the wishes of our readers we commence in the present issue a series of eleven competitions, each of which will stand by itself. We do not propose to give prizes for the series as a whole, but to allot a small prize in the shape of a book for the successful competitors each month.

The competitions will be of a varied nature, including essays, poems on the various phases of the novelist's writings, and on his characters. The Editor reserves the right to publish in *The Dickensian* any of the essays or poems sent in.

The present competition is "Pickwick and the Higher Criticism," details of which are given below. In our February issue the competition will be for the best essay, not exceeding 1,200 words, on "The Domestic Atmosphere in Dickens's Books.'"

Although the prizes will not be very elaborate, we feel that the interest in the competition and the distinction of being the winner will be sufficient inducement and reward for those who enter to do their best.

PICKWICK AND THE HIGHER CRITICISM.

There is a tale in the *Pickwick Papers*, the (supposed) origin of which is not accounted for, and to which the method of the Higher Criticism may be legitimately applied.

Furnish title of same, and specify (from study of the internal evidence of the story) name of the *English author* whom Dickens had most probably in his mind, as suggesting the material of the narrative.

The solution lies well on the surface of the story in question, which is the only one in the book whose source is not recorded. For correct replies we are able to offer, through the generosity of the author, Mr. Robert Allbut, a copy of his book, *Rambles in Dickens-Land*. Such replies, which must be accompanied by 4d. for postage, should reach the Editor (Whitcomb House, Whitcomb Street, London, W.C.) not later than January 18th.

TWO BOOKS ON KENT

I By W. TEIGNMOUTH SHORE *

A VOLUME on Kent, even a humble one, is sure to attract the attention of all good and earnest Dickensians, for the reason that Dickens is so great a factor in the history of the home county; but when that volume is one of Messrs. A. & C. Black's sumptuous series of colour books, and the writer of it such a known Dickensian as Mr. W. Teignmouth Shore, we must confess we approach it with more than the usual avidity.

We were, however, at the outset, not a little disappointed. In a colour book such as this it is only natural that our first thoughts should go out to the pictures; we have nothing but praise for Mr. Biscombe Gardner's work, nor for the manner the paintings have been reproduced, but when dealing with such a literary county as Kent, greater care should have been exercised in the selection of the pictures; thus we regret to notice that of the seventy-three pictures, there are not more than three which can be said to have a Dickensian interest. Gads Hill Place is surely a sufficiently picturesque spot, and one that, apart from its associations, would have been worthy of Mr. Gardner's brush; likewise Rochester High Street, Restoration House, Cooling Church and Castle, and the Leather Bottle at Cobham. Other literary shrines, notably Tappington, of Ingoldsby fame, have been entirely ignored by the artist, although all these places are dealt with by Mr. Shore. Instead of which, we find other quaint and pretty bits, none the less charming maybe than those mentioned above, but without the historic associations which the others possess.

Mr. Teignmouth Shore has not attempted a guide to Dickens's Kent, but what he has to say of Dickens and the county that was all in all to him is freshly written, and the lines bear traces of having been penned by one whose soul was entirely in the work he had set out to do; we wish we could say as much of the Canterbury portion which fills almost half the volume. There is something of the Gradgrind about this; but then we will readily admit the difficulty the author had in writing of the long and glorious history of Canterbury in the hundred pages or so at his disposal, and it is only when we wander "roundabout" to "other shrines" than that of the saintly Thomas, and stop with Mr. Shore "before a very old house bulging out over the road," that we feel at home again; so perhaps it is, after all, our own temperament that causes us to skip the Canterbury portions and sigh for a little more of the "other shrines," whether they be of Dickens, of Ingoldsby, or of Thackeray.

Altogether Mr. Teignmouth Shore has done his Dickens work well, and we heartily congratulate him on the volume that will be a worthy addition to every Dickensian's bookshelf. Regarding the non-Dickens portion of the book, we have to thank Mr. Shore for the many fresh and vivid pen pictures he has given us of the country that no one more admires than does the present writer.

J. B.

* *Kent.* By W. Teignmouth Shore. Painted by W. Biscombe Gardner. London: A. & C. Black. 20s. net.

II. By WALTER JERROLD*

THE latest volume of the Highways and Byways series of delightful books is devoted also to Kent, and is one of the most worthy of them all. Kent has so many attractions for the wanderer. It is the flower garden of England, it is chock full of history, and its literary associations are innumerable. Mr. Walter Jerrold, the author of the volume, was thoroughly alive to the possibilities of the county's wealth in these respects when he undertook his task of presenting a readable book. This he has done to an eminent degree. It is thoroughly well balanced, for nothing is scamped, nothing over-elaborated. To the Dickensian Kent stands out as the

BROADSTAIRS, FROM A DRAWING BY HUGH THOMSON IN "HIGHWAYS AND BYWAYS OF KENT."

Dickens Country, and for this reason Mr. Jerrold's book will be sought after by our readers. But he will not find Dickens overdone, whilst, on the other hand, he will find that the subject has its fair share of notice. Scarcely any places and incidents of note belonging to the novels and writings of Dickens are omitted, and we find that the author knows his subject well. But he does not take for granted all he has seen or read, and does not pass over the conjectural without saying so.

The volume is charmingly and profusely illustrated by Hugh Thomson, many of whose pictures are of Dickens landmarks. By the courtesy of the publishers we are able to reproduce one here.

Altogether it is a book to have and to read, and, having read it, it is a book to carry in the knapsack on a walking tour, for, although it is free of the showman manner of "guide books," it tells all that a sight-seer would require to know and much besides in an informative and at the same time literary style.

* *Highways and Byways in Kent.* By Walter Jerrold. Illustrated by Hugh Thomson. London: Macmillan & Co. 6s.

THE BLACKSMITH

By CHARLES DICKENS

OLD England, she has great warriors,
Great princes, and poets great;
But the Blacksmith is not to be quite forgot,
In the history of the State.

He is rich in the best of all metals,
Yet silver he lacks and gold;
And he payeth his due, and his heart is true,
Though he bloweth both hot and cold.

The boldest is he of incendiaries
That ever the wide world saw,
And a forger as rank as e'er robbed the Bank,
Though he never doth break the law.

He hath shoes that are worn by strangers,
Yet he laugheth and maketh more;
And a share (concealed) in the poor man's field,
Yet it adds to the poor man's store.

Then, hurrah for the iron Blacksmith!
And hurrah for his iron crew!
And whenever we go where his forges glow,
We'll sing what a Man can do.

The above poem appeared in *All the Year Round* for April 20th, 1859, but was not included in F. G. Kitton's collection of *Poems and Verses of Dickens*, nor in R. H. Shepherd's *Plays and Poems of Dickens*, although the following authority that Dickens wrote it has been available since 1873.

In the chapter of Forster's Life of Dickens dealing with *All the Year Round*, the biographer refers to an article of Dickens's, in the first number of that periodical, entitled "The Poor Man and his Beer," and states how he came to write it.

The Rev. T. B. Lawes, of Rothamsted, St. Albans, had interested Dickens in a club that had been set on foot to enable the agricultural labourers of the parish to have their beer and pipes independent of the public-house, and the description of it, says Mr. Lawes, "was the occupation of a drive between this place (Rothamsted) and London, 25 miles. . . . In the course of our conversation I mentioned that the labourers were very jealous of the small tradesmen, blacksmiths and others, holding allotment gardens; but that the latter did so indirectly by paying higher rents to the labourers for a share. This circumstance is not forgotten in the verses on the Blacksmith in the same number, composed by Mr. Dickens and repeated to me while he was walking about, and which close the mention of his gains with allusion to 'a share (concealed) in the poor man's field, which adds to the poor man's store.'"

B. W. MATZ.

MR. DATCHERY

By WILLOUGHBY MATCHETT
Author of "Thomas Griffiths Wainewright," "Certain Lovers in Dickens," etc.

"*He.* Is it a gentleman?" said Mr. Pickwick.
"A wery good imatation o' one, if it ain't," replied Mr. Weller.
Pickwick. Chap. 15.

AND it *was* a gentleman after all. So Mr. Pickwick found. And so, in all probability, should we find it to be the case could we be assured of the actual truth of the Datchery problem. The present writer has toyed with the remarkable theory of Mr. J. Cuming Walters; he has attempted to get it down like a nauseous powder, well covered with Mr. Walters's jam, but in the end he has desisted, made a wry face, and put down the spoon. Emphatically the Helena theory, with its inherent extravagance, is not an idea to associate with the great name of Charles Dickens, who, both as an author and an editor, was, before everything, an expert in ideas.

In many of Dickens's stories solicitors' clerks and kindred characters play leading parts; they are never there simply for ornament. Micawber unmasking Heep, Guppy tracing out the Dedlock mystery, Pancks playing the *dens ex machina* to the Dorrit family are all cases in point. Add to these Wemmick, Swiveller, Nadgett, Newman Noggs, all more or less to the fore in the different plots in which they figure, and we see by analogy that in Bazzard, clerk to Grewgious, we have a character with whom Dickens intended to do something important. Why, when Drood dined with Grewgious at Staple Inn, did Dickens make Bazzard keep them company? It was a little odd to say the least of it. Obviously it was necessary to the plot. Bazzard had to witness Grewgious giving the ring to Edwin Drood. This, in spite of previous sleepiness, he did in a manner eminently business-like. And we are given to understand—in fact, without putting it into actual words, Dickens lays stress on the point—that Bazzard would know the ring again when he saw it. The whole chapter is written to lead up to this act of witnessing, and the belittlement of Bazzard and the sleepiness of the man are artfully introduced as cover for the author's intentions. Drood is made to reproduce the case for the witness's special benefit, and, says Dickens, shooting his clue point-blank at the reader, "Bazzard looked into it." Plainly, Bazzard was to be the one who would eventually discover and recognise the ring in the tomb. In short, Bazzard was Datchery.

It is necessary to go very warily indeed in attempting to appreciate at its true worth the real character of this man. So much is kept up Dickens's sleeve: what we get seems but a half-truth. We are clearly warned by the term "mysterious being," on our first introduction to him, that the true Bazzard is being held in reserve for us to find out if we can. After that there is a good deal of quiet suggestion, a lulling of the reader into acquiescence with the idea that the fellow is of no importance. Drood's pre-

sence helps this idea along. Obviously he can see nothing in Bazzard; to him Grewgious's clerk appears to be a stupid, sleepy, uninteresting person. But it must be remembered that Edwin Drood is—to use his own words of himself—"a shallow, surface kind of fellow," and for the reader to judge Bazzard with the brain of Drood is to fall plumb into the trap of the author. What he should attempt is to estimate the character of Bazzard as it known to Grewgious, because Grewgious is very far indeed from being a fool. There is more in this solicitor's appreciation of his clerk than meets the eye. The springs of it are not on the surface. Under the humour of his talk with Rosa about the play some twist of cleverness in the Bazzard character is intimated; words are weighted with ulterior meaning; things not yet ripe for disclosure are plainly hinted at. The very facts that Grewgious employs Bazzard as a confidential clerk, and says it would be extremely difficult to replace him, should show us that he is not the stupid person Drood takes him for. Nor is he the pretentious being of Mr. Walters's imagination, his play-writing—apart from his own little circle of congenial cronies — being something entirely between himself and Grewgious. "It's a secret," says Grewgious to Rosa, "and, moreover, it is Mr. Bazzard's secret." Bazzard's bearing, properly understood, is simply that of a dispirited man who lacks the initiative that makes "bucking up" "worth while." Though his odd behaviour is evidently not conducive to his master's comfort, yet so sure is Grewgious that Bazzard has something in him, that he has talents of no mean order, that, we are told, he treats him with "unaccountable consideration," refers to him with an almost tender regard as "Poor fellow," adding what is really levelled at the reader, "you quite mistake him," says he feels constantly apologetic towards him, and makes considerable point of the fact that he is "misplaced."

Misplaced! What more significant and suggestive term could we have than that!

In pursuing an object that he had at heart, we may take it that the character of Bazzard would show qualities of a very different order to those we see. What he yearns for is a chance to show what he has in him. He sees no ghost of a chance for his own peculiar talents in the drudgery of clerkship. But let him be given a chance outside that, a chance in which he could give free play to these talents—talents that to some extent have gone to the making of his tragedy, such as a talent for investing the fictitious with an air of reality, a talent for dealing with certain elements of drama and sensation, and laboriously tracing out of them a consecutive dramatic whole; let him be given a chance, too, that gives scope to his love of theatricality, and his gloom vanishes. The hard, dull facts of everyday existence have weighed heavily on his spirits; but let him "make pretend," let him "make pretend," too, with the likelihood of obtaining much *kudos* for himself, of his name eventually figuring in all the papers as chief exposer of a murderer, and Bazzard is another being. He

would jump at such a chance as the great opportunity of his life. Such an assumption as Datchery would add a piquancy to his existence that would tune him up to the highest pitch of enjoyment.

Why should Bazzard disguise himself? Probably he thinks that Jasper, who comes to Staple Inn, may know him by sight. Also because it is just the idea to appeal to him. Datchery being a rebound from depression, there can be no half measures in his portrayal. It is more than a disguise, however; it is a character part carefully devised by a man who has passed his happiest hours in an atmosphere of character parts. A hint here and there from the theatrical stockpot, a few touches drawn from that handy model of an elderly gentleman, his master, and Mr. Datchery becomes a vivid reality. Observe how the stilted phrasing of Grewgious to Miss Twinkleton, such as references to her as "the eminent head" and "the lady whom I have now the honour to see before me" seem to find an echo in Datchery's grandiloquent manner of addressing Sapsea. Indeed, it is impossible to ponder Grewgious's circumlocutory elegance and would-be suavity, as shown in the scene with the school-mistress, and not be struck with the fact that Datchery's manner with Sapsea is carefully framed upon it. Again observe how Grewgious's way of speaking of himself as "a poor old Angular bachelor" is echoed in Datchery's catch phrase, "a single buffer." As to the mere disguise, given a suitable dress, a "puffy-faced, dark-haired *person* of thirty" by simply wearing an ample white wig to hide his "tangled locks"—without a hint of make-up (impossible in daytime)—could pass easily enough as a "*personage*" of uncertain age. Add to all this characterisation that zest of Dickens's own, with which he threw himself into a part, which was his leading trait as an actor, and which he seems to have passed on to his creations, whenever a question of acting or disguise arose.

The first thing Mr. Datchery does in Cloisterham is to order a good meal, with a pint of sherry, albeit, from the fact that there is nobody in the Crozier coffee-room but the waiter, it is probably neither lunch nor dinner-time. We have been expressly told in an earlier chapter that Mr. Bazzard was not formed for starvation. Then as to the Datchery allusion to "the old tavern way of keeping scores": here we have the real man in communion with himself, showing a species of knowledge, let it be said, absolutely impossible to a young girl fresh from Ceylon. "*I like* the old tavern way," he says: sure 'tis a pleasing reminiscence of a chalk-mark past. Notice the generous detail, "Illegible except to the scorer. The scorer not committed, the scored debited with what is against him": plainly he has seen it all in working scores of times. There seems a touch of the country about this "tavern way"; it is a primitive method hardly in vogue in the neighbourhood of Staple Inn, and though Bazzard doubtless consorted with his play-writing cronies in some London house of call, this happy memory seems derived from earlier and more bucolic days. Pleasant pictures of little country-side taverns would probably rise upon his mental

view, of snug bars, where the heavy ticking of the clock, and the occasional swinging open and flapping to of the door, to admit the entry of clumping boots, would accentuate the calm prevailing. Then, again, would the long-drawn-out tones of men, rising and falling like a tide of rusticity about the Bazzard ear, assert itself as of old; once again would he feel the smack of the old October on his palate. For yes, this soaring spirit was reared in a country district, being the son of a Norfolk farmer, so we see his allusion comes in absolutely pat. Dickens is thoroughly consistent in these little details. How casually we note the manner—if we note it at all, which Mr. Walters for one does not—in which Datchery, when seen by the Opium Woman, under the odd circumstances of sitting in the vaulted room, open to the thoroughfare, is passing his time. But when we call to mind that "writing"—for that is what he is doing—is Bazzard's cherished hobby, the word holds for us all the force of a first-class clue.

Despite artfulness, Dickens really made no very great mystery of Mr. Datchery. We are clearly told by Grewgious when Rosa takes refuge with him, that "he (Bazzard) is off duty here, altogether just at present." Nothing could be more suggestive of the truth. Dickens, however, as good as tells us who the buffer is in Grewgious's reply to Rosa's question, "Is the tragedy named, sir?" The veiled allusion to the Drood mystery, and to Datchery's hopes of solving it are scarcely to be misunderstood. The underlying meaning seems to leap out at us.

"Strictly between ourselves," answered Mr. Grewgious, "it has a dreadfully appropriate name. It is called the Thorn of Anxiety. But Mr. Bazzard hopes—and I hope—that it will come out at last."

There is a world of meaning in that "dreadfully."

The figure of a Chinaman depicted on the cover suggests a Chinese element in the story, which, as we have it, cannot be said to play any part. It is not unlikely that in order to overhear Jasper's ravings, when under the influence of opium, Bazzard was to pay a visit to the den, for which purpose a Chinese disguise would, almost certainly, have to be assumed, his nondescript style of face seeming to suit this admirably. A Chinaman lying across the bed in an apparent stupor would be nothing to Jasper, whereas a European would arouse suspicion. Possibly a young Lascar might be there as well: in reality Helena, for her Oriental hue seems chosen for some special purpose.

What about the clues on which Mr. Walters lays so much stress? He is right as to their importance, but is in too much of a hurry to see the realisation of the facts which they portend; and, in his wistful eagerness to find the whole story mapped out in the first half of it, he takes common sense at a flying leap, and makes a superb dash at the rashest of conclusions. Even supposing Dickens had been mad enough to take up with such an idea as making a slender girl pass herself off in public, and in a small cathedral city where her own identity was well known, as a bluff, middle-aged buffer, he would certainly never have hampered the notion by

endowing his heroine with "an un-English complexion" when he could as easily have given her an English one. Helena is the inspirer of the scheme of detection; yes, but in the clues of her not being afraid of Jasper "under any circumstances" and her having worn boy's clothes, one sees no such preposterous idea as her enacting the part of a male "Settler in Cloisterham" for months at a stretch, running no risk at all from Jasper, but rather a forecasting of one special occasion on which she would appear in male attire—or perhaps two such, fraught with instant danger from Jasper, scenes holding for us the acme of sensation.

To the Lascar idea reference has been made; in itself it fulfils all the clues, and is capable of amplification. Much was to be developed in the latter part of the book, the first half sees the detective idea only at its start. Datchery is but the advance guard of unravelment, others were to come in. It may be that Dickens planned a scene in which Helena was to confront Jasper when under the influence of opium, she being made up as far as possible as the murdered man. None but she would have the unflinching courage for such a test. Jasper would "make the journey" with this living model, enacting the murder up to a certain point, at which he would be stopped by witnesses who would emerge from hiding.

For, before everything, the Mystery of Edwin Drood is a story of opium. The keynote is struck in the first chapter. And yet not one of the would-be solvers seems to have grasped that.

THE DICKENS FELLOWSHIP

HERE, THERE, AND EVERYWHERE

CHARITABLE AND NEEDLEWORK GUILD.—The Annual Bazaar in aid of the Guild funds will be held, all being well, during March, probably on Friday, 27th. Gifts of any kind suitable for sale will be gratefully received, but should not be sent in until about the last week before that date. The Hon. Secretary will be pleased to hear from any members—ladies or gentlemen—who will be willing to assist in taking charge of stalls or helping to entertain in any way. Gifts of clothing —new or cast-off—will be gladly received at any time; boots and shoes are still sadly needed, and donations to our funds, however small, will greatly aid our endeavours. At the present time one of our most deserving cases is that of an old woman, 82 years of age, who has been augmenting the allowance of 3s. per week from her parish by "finishing" men's trousers for a firm at 1¾d. per pair! We are hoping to allow this poor creature a small sum each week for the remainder of her life, and 2d. or 3d. from a few members, if sent to us regularly, will enable us to do so.

LONDON.—At the December meeting of the Headquarters' members, Mr. Nix Webber gave dramatic recitals from the works of Dickens. Mr. Webber, it will be remembered, recited "A Christmas Carol" at the Pickwick Exhibition, but, apart from this, he is a new comer as a Dickens reciter. Mr. Webber has the experience of an actor behind him, and no doubt will make his way in his new vocation. On this occasion he presented a varied programme, which included "Mr. and Mrs. Micawber," "The Death of Sydney Carton," "David Copperfield and the Waiter," "Boots at the Holly-Tree Inn," and "Sergeant

Buzfuz's Speech," in all of which he excelled. Such a series of recitals embracing so many phases of the novelist's powers is no small undertaking for one evening's entertainment by one man. But Mr. Webber never got out of sympathy with his audience, and kept its attention and interest from start to finish.

The next meeting of the Fellowship in London takes place at Essex Hall, Essex Street, Strand, on January 8th, at 8 o'clock. On that occasion, Mr. J. Cuming Walters, the Editor of the *Manchester City News*, and author of "Clues to the Mystery of Edwin Drood," will lecture on "Dickens's Ideals of Womanhood." Members will be admitted on presenting their tickets: non-members on payment of sixpence.

BRIGHTON.—The members met at Steine House on December 7th, under the presidency of Mr. Henry Bristow, when a paper on "Charles Dickens and Religion" was read by Mr. W. F. Fowler. The lecturer emphasised the fact that the novelist's great power lay in his appreciation of the spirit which underlies all forms of religion. Though himself a staunch Protestant, he did not care to attach himself to any definite form of religion, but preserved a broad and conservative mind, and intensely hated the ultra-Protestant spirit—the rousing of religious animosity against co-religionists of the Roman Catholic faith. In the course of a most interesting paper, Mr. Fowler illustrated his remarks by various extracts from the novelist's writings, and especially cited such characters as Pecksniff, Stiggins, Chadband, Mrs. Jellyby, and Mrs. Pardiggle. A discussion followed, in which the Rev. Jos. Gay and the chairman participated.

BRIXTON.—A meeting was held on December 2nd, 1907, in the Ladies' Parlour of Brixton Independent Church, at 8 p.m. Fair attendance of members and friends. Mr. Sidney Marriott occupied the chair. Mr. St. John G. Ervine (formerly Secretary of the Brixton Fellowship) read a forty minutes' paper on "The Philosophy of Charles Dickens," in demonstration of the master's efforts—as evinced in all his writings—for the advancement of administrative and social reform. He endeavoured to show the relationship between the true Dickensian spirit and Socialism, a doubtful phase of his subject which evoked subsequent discussion. Messrs. B. W. Matz, J. W. Ley, S. Marriott, and R. Allbutt took part in the debate that followed, endorsing the Dickensian Philosophy of Reform, but entirely deprecating the idea of Socialism as being therewith connected. Mr. Ervine briefly replied.

On December 16th there was a good attendance of members and friends. Chairman, Mr. W. J. Sherlock. The evening's entertainment comprised a reading of *The Cricket on the Hearth*, by Mr. R. Allbut. It was given in three sections, and was received with warm appreciation. Two songs, very effectively rendered by Miss Sherlock, enhanced the enjoyment of the occasion. A cordial vote of thanks was unanimously carried, in the interest of all concerned.

DUBLIN.—On November 5th the first of a series of "social evenings" was held in the Sackville Café. Mr. M. D. Collins, who presided, conducted the proceedings in an admirable manner, and a most enjoyable evening was spent, the members contributing an excellent programme of music and recitations. The monthly general meeting was held in the Hall, 6, Stephen's Green, on November 21st. Sir Charles Cameron presided, and the programme took the form of a Dickens Recital by Mr. and Mrs. McHardy-Flint and Miss Cora McHardy-Flint, and included selections from the *Pickwick Papers*, *Dombey and Son*, *Sketches by Boz*, *Martin Chuzzlewit*, and *Household Words*. Mr. and Mrs. McHardy-Flint and their daughter, who are well known in Dublin as distinguished elocu-

tionists, have seldom been heard to better effect, and were repeatedly encored by the large and appreciative audience. The striking feature of the evening was Mr. McHardy-Flint's recital of "The Drunkard's Death," from *Sketches by Boz*, which was given with wonderful power by the reciter, who brought out every point with admirable effect, and won hearty applause from his hearers. Another specially interesting item in an excellent programme was an adaptation of *Dombey and Son*, entitled "Mr. and Mrs. Dombey," which was read by Mr. and Mrs. McHardy-Flint with marked success. Altogether the evening proved a most enjoyable one.

Mr. J. Shaw has been compelled, owing to delicate health, to resign his office of Hon. Secretary and Treasurer, and Mr. George A. Prescott has been appointed to fill the position. Mr. Wm. J. Preston has been elected Hon. Assistant Secretary, while Mr. Shaw's name has been added to the list of Vice-Presidents. During the month the membership of the branch has largely increased, and now numbers nearly 200.

At the monthly meeting held in the Sackville Hall on December 12th, Mr. Arthur Humphreys, of Manchester, delivered his lecture entitled, "An Evening with Dickens," to a large and appreciative audience, consisting of about 250 members and friends. The lecture, which was illustrated by a large number of limelight views, was listened to throughout with the greatest interest, and Mr. Humphreys was heartily thanked at the conclusion. Sir Charles Cameron being unable to attend, the chair was occupied by Mr. J. T. Robson, who drew the attention of the members to the scheme which is on foot to provide a free dinner to some 150 newsboys of Dublin on Christmas Day. The members having responded generously to this appeal, no difficulty in carrying out the project is anticipated. Mr. W. H. Huish has kindly placed the Sackville Café at the disposal of the Committee for the occasion.

FOREST GATE.—The monthly meeting was held at the Earlham Hall on December 12th, when Mr. John Toscenie gave a recital of "A Christmas Carol." If proof were needed of the popularity of this reciter and his subject, it was forthcoming on this evening, for more than two hundred enthusiasts braved the elements, and were well rewarded for their enthusiasm by his excellent rendering of the "Carol." The intervals between the Staves were filled with solos by Madame Lena Michelbacher and Mr. A. W. Byerley, who were each awarded encores. Miss Edna Freeman, a clever child pianist, accompanied. Mr. G. Saunders Jacobs, a Vice-President of the Branch, presided. On January 2nd the Branch is holding an informal supper and party at the George and Vulture, Lombard Street. Two poor children's parties are arranged, one to two hundred children on January 15th, and the other to one hundred on January 23rd.

HASTINGS.—The second meeting of the season took place at the Queen's Hotel, on November 21st. Major C. Vipan, D.S.O., presided. The programme consisted of the following items, and was excellently carried out:—Pianoforte solo, "Polonaise" (in C Minor), by Miss Alice Norton; songs, "The Deathless Army," by Mr. H. Osborne; "An Evening Song" and "Take a pair of sparkling eyes," by Mr. Hay; "For all eternity," "Hushee," and "A May Morning," by Miss Gertrude Elliott; "My dear soul" and "Vanity Fair," by Mrs. Hoad; harp solo, "Variations on Love's Young Dream," and readings, "Hotels and Inns in Dickens's Works," by Mr. G. Locke, J.P.; and "Mr. Wemmick's Courtship," by Mr. Horatio Robinson. The readings were of a very interesting nature, the former giving the hearers a little idea of what Charles Dickens saw in his travels. The latter was well read, and was exceedingly amusing.

The subject of a recital by the Rev. C. E. Charlesworth being "A

Christmas Carol," combined with the fact that the meeting was on behalf of the laudable cause of charity, made the meeting on December 12th, at the Queen's Hotel, of an extremely pleasant character. In the absence, through indisposition, of Major Vipan, D.S.O., the President, Mr. A. J. Adams presided. Mr. Charlesworth's powers as an elocutionist are well known, and the copious illustrations punctuating his recital enabled the large audience to better appreciate the austere Scrooge and the torments he experienced in the presence of three spirits. Miss Beatrice Root and Mr. H. Mills, vocalists of no mean ability, entertained the gathering to some enjoyable songs.

LIVERPOOL.—On November 19th the Rev. T. H. Martin, M.A., gave a lecture on Ibsen's great epic "Brand," in which he presented a masterly analysis of the drama, showing its message to the present generation. Mr. Stanley Lowell, on December 3rd, provided an extremely interesting lime-light lecture on "Ancient Egypt." The views thrown on the screen, for the most part the lecturer's own taking, were much appreciated. Members turned up in great force on Saturday, December 7th, to support the whist drive in aid of the Fellowship funds, and a most enjoyable and successful evening was spent, thanks to the energy and enthusiasm of Mrs. Bell, Mr. Jaggard, and Mr. Johnson.

MANCHESTER.—At the last monthly meeting, Dr. Edgar Browne, President of the Liverpool Branch, gave an interesting address on "Why the Superior Person does not like Dickens." In the course of his remarks the lecturer said he had come to Manchester to help to promote the *entente cordiale* between the various Branches of the Fellowship. It had been urged against Dickens that he was not an "artist." He was not; he was a giant, and a giant would occasionally blunder and miss the *finesse* of a dwarf. The present generation, which went in for "the simple life," could not stand the robust qualities of Dickens. The inartistic quality of his work was due to the method of production—the necessity for making an interesting monthly part rather than looking to the interest of a whole. For example, "Nicholas Nickleby" was a series of detached stories, and should be read as such, and not as the life of "Nicholas Nickleby." The same thing was true of "Martin Chuzzlewit." In proposing a vote of thanks to Dr. Browne, Mr. J. Cuming Walters humorously and vigorously contested several points raised in the address.

MANHATTAN.—This Branch continues to thrive. Up to date three meetings have been held. At the first dinner of the season it again had the honour of entertaining Mr. Bransby Williams, who, graciously retaliating, aroused great enthusiasm by his interpretative characterisations of Micawber, Uriah Heep, and Dan'l Peggotty. The speakers of the evening were Messrs. Crosby, Henry George, H. W. Weir, W. V. Hirsh, and Dr. F. A. Lyons. Miss Jessie Stanley Mook was the vocalist. On November 19th a conversazione and "Social Tea" was held, at which *Great Expectations* brought forth some of the talent of the Branch. Miss Pearl Etynge read the quarrel scene between Miss Havisham and Estella, Mrs. Frances Carter read the "Christmas Dinner," and Mr. Chas. H. Govan gave a wonderfully dramatic recital of the convict's story to Pip. Dr. Lyons read a paper on the characters of the book, which showed him to be a psychologist of high order. This was followed by a discussion of the paper and of the book itself. Mr. Bengough, of the Toronto Branch, was present, and gave an address, concluding with a poem of his own in honour of Columbus, which was nothing if not Dickensian.

SHEFFIELD.—At the Cutlers' Hall on November 16th nearly two hundred members of the Branch met at an enjoyable social gathering. Mr. G. W. Parker occupied the chair. An interesting programme was submitted, which included recitals by Mrs. W. H. Bagnall, from *Nicholas Nickleby*, and the Misses G. and E. Senior presented the quarrel between

Tilly and Fanny Squeers. Mrs. T. H. Warkett and Messrs. Cecil Everitt and Archie Waite were heard to advantage in the amusing scene wherein Mr. Pickwick announces to Mrs. Bardell that he is about to engage a man servant. Miss Helen Roberts and Mr. W. H. Williams acted a sketch of Dick Swiveller and the Marchioness, whilst Mr. Cecil Everitt's impersonations of Uriah Heep, Sydney Carton, and Fagin were admirably rendered.

SOUTHAMPTON.—The third meeting took place on December 16th. Mr. Leaward gave an excellent reading from *Nicholas Nickleby*, and the Rev. W. Garwood a paper entitled "Dickens's London." Mrs. Edwards, Miss E. Tracy, Miss M. Campbell, and Mr. Cregan contributed musical items. A substantial collection was made in aid of the Fund for Free Meals for Poor Children, in response to the eloquent address and appeal of the President, Mr. J. R. Smith, J.P., on the subject.

Mr. Snowden Ward's lecture on the 29th ult. resulted in a balance of £9, which has been forwarded towards the Dickens National Memorial Library Fund. The Hon. Mrs. Eliot Yorke has also contributed five guineas towards the same.

TORONTO.—The November meeting of the Branch took place at the Normal School on the 7th of the month. Vice-President J. W. Bengough occupied the chair. The book of the evening was the *Old Curiosity Shop*. The programme proved to be one of unusual excellence, and at the close of the meeting a large number of new members were secured.

On November 21st, 22nd, and 23rd the Dickens Fellowship Players presented "The Cricket on the Hearth" at the Conservatory Music Hall. The performances last May of "Bardell *v.* Pickwick" by the Players were so successful in every respect that there was a large advance sale for the "Cricket," the full seating capacity of the hall being sold out soon after the reserved plan opened. The public evidently expected a great deal from the Players, and they were not disappointed. When the curtain closed on the last act it was with a crowded audience in front laughing and applauding and wiping away their tears by turns in the very spirit and feeling of the heart of the Master of Good Fellowship himself. The characters were really well done. Mr. F. M. Bell-Smith gave a touching rendering of the old toy-maker, Caleb Plummer, and the blindness of his daughter was admirably delineated by Miss Winifred Parker. She realised the pathetic strength of her situation with much force. Dot, played by Mrs. E. H. Stafford, was charmingly sweet and homelike, and the final explanation scene with honest John Pearybingle was acted with much animation. The carrier himself, big and uncouth and well-meaning, found a clever representative in S. T. Church. E. S. Williamson, as the gruff and cynical Tackleton, shared the honours of the evening with Mr. Bell-Smith. Miss Blanche Walter made the most of her part as Tilly Slowboy, and drew much laughter by her comedy. Miss Jessie Malcolm, Miss M. Pennell, Miss Marjorie Stafford, Miss Bengough, and Messrs. Sweetman, Hayden, and Milton Lee filled their parts creditably.

WEST LONDON.—The Branch met on November 28th in the Lecture Hall, Ealing. Mr. Jacobs presided, and over sixty members were present. Mr. Ley and Mr. Marriott, from Headquarters, honoured the meeting with a visit. The programme commenced by Mr. Vere Bass reading the "Parish Clerk," from *Pickwick*. Miss Eilian Hughes moved nearly all her hearers to tears by her excellent reading of "The Shoemaker," from the *Tale of Two Cities*. Mr. Frank Vingoe caused hearty laughter by his recitation of "David Copperfield and the Waiter," and, as a second item, reading "Fezziwig's Ball." Master Eric Strood delighted everybody by his clever recitation of "Bob Sawyer's Party";

and Mr. Jacobs gave a good reading from *Martin Chuzzlewit* of the "Passage on the fast-sailing line-of-the-packet ship 'The Screw.'"

OTHER MEETINGS.

A lecture entitled "Dickens in Kent" was delivered in the Masonic Halls, West Regent Street, Glasgow, on November 29th, by Mr. A. J. Philip, a member of the Gravesend Branch of the Fellowship, under the auspices of the Glasgow Dickens Society. Sheriff Fyfe presided. Mr. Philip, in the course of his lecture, dealt with Dickens in his relations with Kent as shown in his works, and advanced some theories of his own in regard to the origin of places and persons mentioned in Dickens's novels. He said he considered Gravesend as the prototype of Muggleton, and Paddock Manor as Dingley Dell. In regard to the generally accepted Honeymoon House at Chalk, he said the real house was a small weather-board cottage some fifty yards away, nearly opposite to the real original of Joe Gargery's forge, which was generally believed to be situated at Cooling. As a matter of fact, there never was a forge of the description at Cooling. Dealing with Gravesend, he suggested that Uptown of *Great Expectations* had many of the features found in that town. The lecture was illustrated with an interesting series of lime-light views of the Kentish towns and villages associated with the great novelist.

SEEND, WILTS.—On November 25th Mr. Schomberg, a member of the Fellowship, gave a reading in the Schoolroom of "A Christmas Carol," effectively enhanced by the village handbells and magic lantern slides. The profits will be given to Sir William Treloar's Christmas Fund for Crippled Children.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

MR. ARTHUR WAUGH AND LITTLE DORRIT

SIR,—In regard to Mr. Arthur Waugh's interesting lecture on Dickens's women, at Essex Hall, if you could spare me the space, I should like to touch on a point which failed to occur to me at the time.

Mr. Waugh spoke of Little Dorrit as being "so unnecessarily good—so story-bookishly good." Now, it seems to me that Dickens was true to his art in making the natural kindness and good feeling of the father—whose character, it must be remembered, we only see as cankered by the prison blight—descend to one of his children; and, owing to her peculiar situation, true, too, in enhancing it. Whatever goodness Amy Dorrit may have started with would be redoubled by her early acceptation of the cares and responsibilities of her family. Responsibility always makes for righteousness. Children steady their parents by the bare fact of existing. Old Dorrit was, in a manner of speaking, the child of his daughter. The peculiar helplessness of his position, cut off as he was from the outer world, from all the issues of life, could not but appeal to the sense of motherhood innate in her. The strain of selfishness that is mingled with the pathos of the poor prisoner would help to exact from her the most untiring devotion. It is true to life. Not so much story-book goodness as bedrock humanity.

That Dickens, more than any other novelist, had the inspiration of innocent young girlhood is true enough. With him it was so pure and beautiful and angelic a thing that he shrank from profaning it by too intimate a gaze. Nor did he care to sound the note of sex in it otherwise than slightly. They love and marry—heroines of this type—but rather as if they do it to order. Dora Spenlow is an exception. She is endowed with all the charm of sex. Fascinating Dora!

Yours faithfully WILLOUGHBY MATCHETT.

Nov. 20th, 1907.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

"I didn't know, and now I do know, and that shows the advantage of asking, don't it?"—ROSA DARTLE.

QUESTIONS

PORTRAIT OF GEORGE DOLBY.—Can any one tell me through the medium of *The Dickensian* if there is any portrait in any one of the numerous publications of Dickens of George Dolby, who acted in the capacity of manager to Charles Dickens during the second series of Readings given by him?

SUBSCRIBER.

THE DREADNOUGHT.—Can any reader say where Dickens mentions the Dreadnought in his writings?—JACK.

DICKENSIANA MONTH BY MONTH

BOOKS

The Uncommercial Traveller; and *Our Mutual Friend.* 2 vols. Forming vols. 31 and 32 of the "National" Edition. London: Chapman & Hall, Ltd.

Highways and Byways in Kent. By Walter Jerrold. Illustrated by Hugh Thomson. 6s. London: Macmillan & Co.

Suppressed Plates. By G. S. Layard (Dickens & others). 10s. 6d. net. London: A. & C. Black.

MAGAZINE AND NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

"The Story of Dickens's Christmas Carol." By Ernest H. Rann. Illustrated. *Cassell's Magazine*, December.

"Parallels with Dickens & Scott." By Percy Fitzgerald. *Chambers' Journal*, December.

"The Christmas Garland." Illustrated. *Pearson's Magazine*, December.

"Small Talk with my Father." By Walter Frith. *Cornhill Magazine*, December.

"A Plea for Christmas." Illustrated. By Lorrimer Grey. *The Boudoir*, December.

"Charles Dickens as a Socialist." By Edwin Pugh. *The New Age* (continued), November 28, December 5, 12, 19.

"Dickens and 'Father Christmas.'" By Theodore Watts-Dunton. *Nineteenth Century*, December.

"The Christmas Books of Dickens." Illustrated. *The Young Man*, December.

"Famous Christmas Numbers of the Past." By H. Pearl Humphry. *Girls' Realm*, December.

"Le Roman Anglais en 1907." By T. de Wyzewa. *La Revue des Deux Monde*, November 15.

"Charles Dickens's Last Walk." *T.P.'s Weekly*, December 6.

"The Mystery of Edwin Drood." Interview with Mr. Tree and Mr. Comyns Carr. By Raymond Blathwayt. *Cardiff S. Wales Daily News*, November 14; *The Tribune*, November 23; *Liverpool Courier*, November 22; *Glasgow Evening Citizen*, November 23, and other papers.

"Table Talk: a Dickens Cryptogram." *Daily News*, November 23.

"The Makers of Christmas." By W. J. Gallagher. *Great Thoughts*, December 7.

"Things I Think About: Christmas and Dickens." By James Douglas. *M.A.P.*, December 7.

"New 'Dolly Varden' Comedy." *Pall Mall Gazette*, December 6.

"Cheeryble Limited." *Glasgow Times*, December 4.

"Bath: a City of Historic Houses." Illustrated. *Bazaar*, December 11.

"Do People Read Dickens?" December 12, 13.

"A Christmas Dinner with Dickens," By George Edgar. *Strood News*, December 13.

DIARY OF DICKENS MEETINGS

JANUARY

1. Shrewsbury Branch: Fortnightly Meeting, at County Café, at 8.
2. Forest Gate Branch: Informal Supper and Party, at "George and Vulture."
4. Brighton Branch: Evening arranged by Mrs. Maxwell Davis, at Steine House, at 8.
6. Brixton Branch; New Year's Meeting.
7. Liverpool Branch: "Extension of Social Work," by Officers and Members, at Royal Institution, at 8.
8. Headquarters: Lecture, "Dickens's Ideals of Womanhood," by Mr. J. Cuming Walters, at Essex Hall, Essex Street, W.C., at 8.
   Forest Gate Branch: "Education's Debt to Charles Dickens," by Mr. H. Herbert, at Earlham Hall.
9. Blackheath Branch: "Dickens as a Social Reformer," by Mr. J. W. T. Ley, and "Betty Higden," by Miss E. M. Miniken, at Avenue House, at 8.
   Edinburgh Branch: "Dombey and Son," Paper and Discussion, at 5, St. Andrew Square, at 8.
10. Sheffield Branch: Whist Drive, at Cutlers' Hall, at 8.
    Birmingham Branch: "Bleak House," Paper and Discussion, at Association Buildings, Dale End, at 8.
    Hastings Branch: Meeting at Queen's Hotel.
    Hull Branch: "Dickens's Exaggerations," by Mrs. A. Hall, at Lecture Hall, Kingston Square, at 8.
    Manchester Branch; "Charles Dickens's Literary Children," by Mrs. Laurence Clay, at 7.45.
14. Hastings Branch: Meeting at Wellington Square Baptist Church.
15. Shrewsbury Branch; Fortnightly Meeting at County Café, at 8.
    Forest Gate Branch: Tea and Entertainment to 200 poor children, at Barclay Hall, Green Street.
    Bristol and Clifton Dickens Society: Miscellaneous Contributions at Literary and Philosophic Club, at 8.
20. Southampton Branch: Social Evening, at Mount Pleasant County School, at 8.
    Brixton Branch: Evening arranged by Mr. Block, at 8.
21. Liverpool Branch: Magazine Evening, by Members, at Royal Institution, at 8.
    Rochester Branch: Recital, by Mr. Frank Speaight, at 8.
    Hull Branch: "Our Mutual Branch," criticisms, &c., at Lecture Hall, Kingston Square, at 8.
22. Maidstone Branch: Recital, by Mr. Frank Speaight, at Corn Exchange, at 8.
    Edinburgh Branch: "A Study of King Lear," by Mr. David Graham, at 5, St. Andrew's Square, at 8.
23. Forest Gate Branch: Tea and Entertainment at Canning Town, to 100 poor children.
24. Blackheath Branch; Old Folks' Dinner, at Shrubbery Road School, Lewisham, at 7.
28. Hastings Branch: Recital of "Pickwick Papers," by Mr. Frank Speaight, at Public Hall.
29. Shrewsbury Branch: Fortnightly Meeting, at County Café, at 8.
30. West London Branch: Monthly Meeting, at Municipal Buildings, at 8.
31. Stockport Branch: "Little Paul Dombey," by Mr. W. J. G. Holt.

PORTRAIT OF DICKENS

Issued about 1837

Although signed "Phiz," Hablôt K. Browne repudiated it.

[*See p.* 36.